

November 5, 2020

Dear Colleagues and Members of the Cancer Registry Community,

The CRGC data collection efforts for the 2018 reporting period have now met the deadline at which our colleagues in the California Cancer Registry lock our statewide database, and the case content for our concurrent submission to the Surveillance Epidemiology and End Results (SEER) Program of the National Cancer Institute is thus effectively set. We are, as you may know, judged on the completeness, accuracy, and quality of these data, data on which stakeholders across the state—and the country—rely to observe cancer incidence and trends, including survivorship, in our collective, longstanding effort to reduce the cancer burden.

I write to thank you in appreciation that November is a time of gratitude, grounded, of course, in the tradition of Thanksgiving. This year, the tradition has special resonance for us. As CRGC made an abrupt transition this spring to reorganize its operations with a distributed and remote workforce in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, we began individual and collective journeys marked with ongoing uncertainty for our professional lives, our communities—including our community of work—and the health of people we each and all care about. We have witnessed through our communications with you, our colleagues and peers throughout the state, how the pandemic, its economic impacts, our widespread fires, and other tragedies have made work, and the work of cancer registration more difficult. Yet, this year's data compilation and submission efforts have been successful. This success is directly attributable to the dedication and diligence of cancer registry professionals whose daily efforts contribute to and support the totality and value of the data we are honored to curate on behalf of the Californians we serve. I thank you. We all thank you.

Because, as you know, cancer registry data are uniquely valuable to assessing patterns of racial and ethnic disparities in cancer incidence—who bears the burden of cancer, where, when, and how—the work of cancer registration bears a direct and evidence-based relationship to equity and justice in health and medicine. This attribute of cancer registration is especially important given the political moment in which we live, and meaningful to CRGC personnel given the breadth of our catchment area across 48 counties and the millions of people for whom we serve regional registry functions. We are proud to observe our data marshaled in support of research to unpack structural issues ranging from access to health care and insurance to environmental exposures at work and in our communities.

My colleagues have often reminded me of the particular challenges of the 2018 Data Changes, and of the structural incorporation of electronic pathology reporting into our cancer registry programs in California. In accommodation of the 2018 Data Changes, we now look to a compressed timeline for submission of 2019 cases—due December 31, 2020! A new challenge is upon us just as we take this moment to reflect, and to be grateful for what has endured and been possible despite this most difficult year. I am reminded of my naïve surprise that Odysseus should embark again, on a new journey, at the end of Homer's epic poem, almost immediately after having restored order in his home. If we can be of assistance with 2019 case reporting, please do reach out, and know that as you may do so, we are mindful the generosity of your recent efforts.

I extend to you all the same wish to you that I have made to my CRGC colleagues, that you should have the fortitude to keep well, and the compassion to sustain others who may be struggling to do the same.



Robert McLaughlin  
Interim Senior Director of Operations